

Unitarian Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century

D. W. Bebbington

Professor of History, University of Stirling

In 1857 the bustling industrial city of Manchester was divided by a fiercely fought election. The contest did not divide Liberal from Conservative, as might be expected in the mid-nineteenth century, but Liberal from Liberal. The sitting members, John Bright and Thomas Milner Gibson, were believers not only in the principle of free trade under which Manchester's cotton mills flourished but also in the associated axiom of a pacific foreign policy. Trade would prosper, they held, if Britain avoided bellicose gestures such as those beloved of the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. Bright, a Quaker, opposed all aggression; Milner Gibson had just seconded a parliamentary motion censuring Palmerston's aggressive Chinese policy. Bright and Milner Gibson represented the classic position of the Manchester school of politicians. They were challenged, however, by two local men without previous parliamentary experience. James Aspinall Turner was a cotton manufacturer who held, in the manner of Palmerston, that Britain should have 'means of defence against injury or insult' by foreign nations.¹ Sir John Potter, a cotton merchant and a former mayor of Manchester, shared that view. They were duly elected in a Palmerstonian victory at the polls that allowed the Prime Minister to continue in office. The outcome of the Manchester contest was seen a major setback on the national stage for the more pacific and progressive type of Liberalism.

The event aroused particular acrimony. Turner was an angular man who, according to a sympathetic obituarist, often forgot ‘the suavity which lessens the painfulness of a blow, and was not quick in seeking reconciliation’;² Potter was resented as something of a snob who had ostentatiously hosted the Tory Duke of Newcastle. Both these new MPs were Unitarians, Turner maintaining worship in a private chapel on his Pendlebury estate and Potter attending the central Unitarian cause in Cross Street. Yet the election was not a struggle between Unitarians and their opponents, for the prominent supporters of the defeated Bright and Milner Gibson included such men as John Benjamin Smith, another cotton merchant, MP for Stockport and a fellow-member with Turner of Cross Street. This was a Unitarian civil war, dividing the city’s congregations internally and even brothers one from another. Thus Robert Needham Phillips, first elected as MP for Bury in the same year, and his brother Mark Phillips, formerly MP for Manchester, both in cotton and both members of the Unitarian Stand Chapel, took opposite sides in the Manchester contest. The rift in Manchester Liberalism was to be healed over the next couple of years through the efforts of Sir James Potter’s brother Thomas Bayley Potter, a trustee of Cross Street, and Edmund Potter, no relation but a worshipper at Gee Cross Unitarian Chapel, both subsequently MPs themselves. That reconciliation laid the foundations for united Manchester endorsement of Palmerston’s second administration from 1859, often regarded as the foundation of the modern Liberal Party. The whole episode shows something of the political salience of men who entered the nineteenth-century House of Commons as Unitarians. They were leading protagonists in the major public issue of the hour. The Manchester election of 1857 also reveals, as we shall see again, that Unitarians could be deeply divided among themselves on political questions.

Those and related themes can be explored through examining the full range of Unitarians who sat in the House of Commons during the nineteenth century. The denomination poses special problems for the investigator. Unlike other Nonconformist bodies that had sharply defined criteria for membership in terms of faith and practice, the Unitarians were altogether more fluid, often accepting as a person in good standing any attender or even subscriber. Whether a Member of Parliament actually maintained the opinions of Unitarianism while financially supporting its causes is sometimes obscure; and occasionally, as in the case of Joseph Chamberlain that has recently been illuminated by Alan Ruston, we know that somebody who continued to display his Unitarian credentials had actually lost his faith.³ Conversely there were some who were substantially Unitarian in theology but who did not associate with the denomination. Thus James Allanson Picton MP, a former Congregational minister whose ideas had broadened immensely, was described by the *Inquirer* as ‘not a professed Unitarian, but is so much in sympathy with free religious thought that we have never been able to discover the difference’.⁴ Because of the difficulty of recovering the private views of most of the MPs, an attempt has been made here to employ a phenomenological definition of Unitarian allegiance. If a person seems to have been an avowed Unitarian, even if his congregational membership is unclear, he is included in the set of MPs under discussion. There are inevitably borderline cases. Some have been retained who might have been left out on stricter principles of selection. Thus W. J. Fox, the minister of South Place Chapel, Finsbury, who was repudiated by the Presbyterian Board in 1835 for a liaison with a woman not his wife, has been included because some still regarded him as a Unitarian and his funeral was conducted by a Unitarian

minister.⁵ On the other hand certain MPs who were sometimes labelled Unitarians have been omitted because the evidence points to their having ceased to practise before they became MPs. Thus Thomas Burt, one of the first two working-class MPs returned in 1874, who once took an interest in the Unitarian chapel at Choppington in Northumberland, has not been included because by his time in the Commons he was considered ‘an outside member of the denomination’.⁶ Inherited Unitarianism was particularly liable to fade away. The silk manufacturing Brocklehurst family of Macclesfield is a case in point. The father, John, who sat for the town from 1832 to 1868, was sufficiently Unitarian to send his son William to a school conducted by ministers of the denomination around the time he entered parliament, but William himself, who took over his father’s seat in 1868, recalled attending the chapel in the town as though it were part of his youth, not his maturity.⁷ The father has been included in the body of Unitarian MPs; the son has not. Several of those excluded – not excepting William Brocklehurst - may well turn out on further investigation to have been authentic Unitarians.

The relationship between Unitarianism and other religious bodies complicates the task of identifying members of the denomination during this period. It was possible to be a regular attender of another body and yet possess a self-image as a Unitarian, be regarded by others as a Unitarian and even retain membership at a Unitarian place of worship. Thus C. S. Kenny, briefly MP for Barnsley in the 1880s before going on to become Downing Professor of the Laws of England at Cambridge, regularly attended Emmanuel Congregational Church in the university town where he lived, but kept up a lifelong membership of Northgate End Chapel, Halifax, where he had grown up.⁸ Conversely, a regular Unitarian worshipper might have impeccable

credentials of allegiance to another body. Handel Cossham, a Bristol colliery proprietor, attended Trim Street Unitarian Chapel, Bath, while he was MP in the later 1880s, but possessed a solidly Congregational background.⁹ The relationship with the Church of England was even more problematic. Because the established church was the default religious allegiance of the whole population of England, the transition into Anglicanism was often smooth and almost imperceptible. Many Unitarians as they rose in life conformed to the Church of England, quite a number making the change before they entered parliament. Thomas Noon Talfourd, MP for Reading in the 1830s and 1840s, for example, who as a young man had been a Unitarian zealot in Robert Aspland's congregation at Hackney, turned to the established church when he was appointed a Serjeant-at-Law in 1833.¹⁰ The status of the Church of England was an attraction for some, such as the potter Josiah Wedgwood, MP for Stoke-upon-Trent after the Reform Act;¹¹ for others, such as the Manchester banker Sir Benjamin Heywood, its liturgy exerted the appeal, though his transfer to the established church came later than his membership of the Commons.¹² Convenience could also play its part. It was often easier for the purchaser of a country estate to attend a parish church than any Dissenting place of worship. In this class, however, there were some who continued to identify themselves as Unitarians even while worshipping in the national church. The consequence of this dual belonging could be unseemly posthumous debates. On the death in 1905 of Sir Bernhard Samuelson, ironmaster and MP for Banbury, the preacher the local parish church announced that Samuelson 'died as he had lived, a churchman'. But the preacher at Christ Church Chapel, the Unitarian cause in the town, claimed him for that place of worship: he had been not only an attender but also a regular subscriber to the funds.¹³ The location of funerals and the officiants there are no safe guide to denominational allegiance. Thus William Philip

Price, an undoubted Unitarian when he sat in the Commons down to 1873, had a funeral at the parish church next to his country home conducted by the Bishop of Gloucester.¹⁴ Such figures could be ecclesiastical chameleons, taking their religious colouring from context. In each case, however, an effort has been made to estimate the allegiance of the individual at the time he sat in parliament.

The result of this sifting of identities has been to assemble a set of MPs who are certain or very likely to have been Unitarians for at least part of their parliamentary service. It consists of 97 men, a figure so close to a round hundred as to make absolute numbers cited in the analysis virtual percentages. Intriguingly, an earlier study of the Congregationalists, the nearest denominational neighbours to the Unitarians, showed that they produced 102 MPs during the nineteenth century.¹⁵ The numbers are very close. Yet that bare statistic masks a striking contrast. At the 1851 religious census, some 4.4% of the population was Congregationalist, but at the same point only 0.2% was Unitarian.¹⁶ For the MPs to represent at the same ratio the numbers in their denominational constituencies, the Congregational total should have been twenty times the Unitarian figure. The Unitarians, as Lord Macaulay once remarked, formed ‘the most over-represented sect in the Kingdom’.¹⁷

Within this set of men there were a number of linkages. The Manchester circle, so sharply divided in 1857, was a definite cluster. Fourteen MPs, all but two sitting in the middle third of the century, came from the city or its immediate environs, and they gathered round a number of institutions such as the Literary and Philosophical Society and the *Manchester Guardian*. Identified with the cutting edge of Liberal opinion, they were almost all associated with cotton and the Anti-Corn Law

League. The warehouse of Potter's cotton wholesale firm in Manchester was dubbed in the 1830s 'the Liberal plotting-room'.¹⁸ Another grouping, though less sharply defined, consisted of those who attended W. J. Fox's ministry at South Place, Finsbury. It included, apart from Fox himself, at least four MPs and the wife of another. The members of this circle tended to become as radical as their mentor, with Peter Taylor, MP for Leicester from 1862 to 1884, being taunted at his first election as 'anti-everything'.¹⁹ A further grouping of four assembled later in the century round Joseph Chamberlain, who swung the other MPs, a brother, a brother-in-law and his own closest friend, from Liberalism to Unionism in 1886. Beyond these clusters, however, there were other connections between the MPs. Samuel Beale, chairman of the Midland Railway from 1844 to 1864, worked closely with Samuel Carter, the railway's solicitor, in promoting parliamentary bills. J. A. Yates was encouraged in literary pursuits by William Roscoe, and James Heywood put up the money for a prize essay won by C. S. Kenny. But the chief bonds between the MPs were familial. A. J. Williams made his home for some years with his relative Walter Coffin. John Fielden's daughter married a son of John Brocklehurst and Joshua Fielden married Brocklehurst's niece. George Melly was a cousin of William Rathbone, who was in turn a nephew of R. H. Greg, who was brother-in-law of Mark and R. N. Philips, whose daughter married W. E. Price and who himself married as his second wife the daughter of J. A. Yates. Such webs of cousinhood, as the work of Clyde Binfield has demonstrated, were typical of the elite of Nonconformity, but they were specially strong among Unitarian families that were likely to produce MPs because the number of like-minded potential marriage partners was relatively small. The result of close-knittedness could sometimes, as in Birmingham, lead to a measure of political co-ordination, but equally there could be divisions. Edmund Potter clashed with Mark

Philips over the law of copyright in 1841;²⁰ Fox defeated John Fielden for the representation of Oldham in 1847; and the proposal to limit factory work to ten hours a day deeply sundered the Unitarians who were then or later in parliament. John Fielden was a leader of the Ten Hours movement and Joseph Crook an acolyte; Mark Philips, John Potter and John Bowring were among the opponents. R. H. Greg even wrote a book rebutting Fielden's classic *Curse of the Factory System* (1836). Unitarians, for all their bonding, could be diverse in their political aims.

What, then, was the social composition of the Unitarian MPs? Setting apart two who have escaped identification by occupation, we can recognise some as belonging to the upper classes. Seven began as the owners of landed estates, sometimes of long standing: Daniel Gaskell's family had possessed a Lancashire property since the Commonwealth and Thomas Paget's had been Leicestershire landowners since the reign of Henry VI. One, Lord Castlereagh, an unusual Unitarian MP but a member of the Strand Street congregation in Dublin, was actually a peer of the realm. Many of the MPs, however, expressed unguarded contempt for the upper classes during the struggle over the corn laws. 'What right', exploded R. H. Greg in his diary, 'has the landed interest or rather the landlords to exclusive or unequal protection?'.²¹ Several of the anti-corn law men went on to urge drastic reform of the land laws, with T. B. Potter, the most ideological of them all, attacking the principle of primogeniture that kept together landed estates. Yet antagonism for the aristocracy and gentry was by no means uniform or sustained among the MPs. In 1855 Greg himself set up in life as something of a squire near his mills at Styal in Cheshire, where he cultivated conifers, rhododendrons and azaleas. Fourteen more acquired landed estates with the proceeds of business enterprise. Joshua Fielden, for example,

moved in 1872 from Todmorden, the Pennine town where his father had made a fortune in cotton, to Nutfield Priory, near Redhill in Surrey, where he transformed the house into a vast Gothic mansion with thirty rooms. He tried to suggest that he had not forgotten his roots by incorporating stained glass windows illustrating the cotton trade, the Ten Hours Act his father John had carried and 'Honest John' himself.²² Five more, without purchasing country estates, lived off private means acquired by their families in business. Two actually entered the peerage, James Kitson being created Lord Airedale in 1907 and T. G. Ashton becoming Lord Ashton of Hyde in 1911. Both William Smith, the London grocer who acted as parliamentary leader of Dissent in the early years of the century, and G. W. Wood, the cotton manufacturer who took his place, believed in deferential co-operation with the aristocrats who led the Whigs. Of Wood it was said that 'the cast of his mind was aristocratical'.²³ This appreciation of rank was far stronger among Unitarians than among Congregationalists, whose MPs included none sprung from landed families and only six, not fifteen, who obtained country estates later in life. The Unitarians MPs reflected a denomination that constituted the elite of Dissent.

Far more of the MPs nevertheless belonged to the industrial and commercial sector. As many as eleven were cotton manufacturers, often also engaged in large-scale commerce, and six more, all in Manchester, were solely cotton merchants. Seven were in other branches of textile manufacture, one was a calico printer and two were in hosiery. These men were some of the most characteristic entrepreneurs of the era of British industrialisation, frequently becoming hugely successful. John Brocklehurst ran the largest silk mill in England, employing over 8,000 people, and Edmund Potter owned the largest calico printing firm in the world. John Marshall of

Leeds accumulated a fortune in flax spinning that at his death in 1845 amounted to around £2 millions. Eleven of the MPs were in a variety of further manufacturing industries, the largest group being three in iron and steel, and three were also in extractive industries. In addition there were two builders, two brewers and a printer. The merchants, five of them based in Liverpool alongside the six from Manchester, numbered nineteen. At least twelve in this industrial/mercantile sector went on to play prominent roles in chambers of commerce. For most of them business came before politics, with Greg in 1839 and R. N. Philips in 1857 not wanting election because of the demands of their firms and Joseph Crook retiring in mid-parliament during 1861 for the same reason. For many of them, in fact, they were engaged in politics in the first place chiefly because of business concerns. Thus Thomas Thornely, a Liverpool merchant, entered public life in 1811 in protest against the Orders in Council that threatened the international trade of the port; and John Marshall stood for parliament in 1826 in order, as he put it, to ‘maintain the interests of trade and commerce’.²⁴ The forty-one industrialists and nineteen merchants together make a body of sixty men, by far the largest grouping.

The remainder of the MPs were more miscellaneous in their occupations. There were five bankers and two engaged in other financial affairs, together with another six who, though primarily in other walks of life, acted as bankers too. Eight were active barristers, two of them turning into academic lawyers, and there were five others who, though called to the bar, did not practise. Three were solicitors, and there were two others who, though qualified, were non-practising. Many of those in financial or legal affairs owed their success to involvement in the industrial and commercial expansion of the age, and so should be seen as very close to the sixty in

those fields. Sir Benjamin Heywood, for instance, owed his fortune to the family bank that had done much to finance the enterprise of Manchester and he was elected for Lancashire in 1831 as the first MP representing the commercial rather than the landed interest. In addition there was one each in journalism (C. P. Scott, the celebrated editor of the *Manchester Guardian*), in university chemistry (Sir Henry Roscoe, the holder of a chair at Owens College, Manchester) and in agriculture (John Pinkerton, a farmer from County Antrim). Although at least four others had proletarian origins, there was only a single working-class MP: Fred Maddison, a compositor by trade who rose to political prominence through trade unionism and entered parliament in 1897. He was the one exception to the rule that Unitarian MPs achieved at least middle-class status.

The party affiliations of the MPs were by no means evenly balanced. Six of them sat in pre-1832 parliaments when loyalties were more fluid and either did not adopt an obvious party allegiance or else changed it from time to time. Ten, however, in this early period were identifiable Whigs, a natural consequence of the traditional association of Dissent with the cause of civil and religious liberty. Joseph Birch, a Liverpool merchant standing in Nottingham in 1802, gave typical expression to their views. No man, he declared, ‘more deeply venerates the present King upon the throne than myself; but we have a Constitution, and I love *also* the privileges of the People’.²⁵ An additional MP returned after the passing of the Reform Act was still Whig rather than reforming or Liberal. But the overwhelming majority of those sitting between 1832 and 1900 were Liberals. Seventy-three, three-quarters of the whole set of MPs, can be assigned that label. ‘We need say nothing’, remarked the *Inquirer* at the 1868 general election, ‘to stimulate the Liberal sentiments of our

readers.’²⁶ Many agreed with George Melly, another Liverpool merchant elected MP for Stoke-upon-Trent in the same year, who called himself a ‘strong supporter of Mr. Gladstone’.²⁷ Behind the general label ‘Liberal’, however, there was a great range of opinion. Some Liberals in each generation were of the more advanced variety. John Fielden was distinctly radical in championing factory workers in the 1830s; several Unitarians were prepared to encourage revolutionaries in Italy during the 1850s and 1860s, with James Stansfeld losing junior government office in 1864 because he backed clandestine fund-raising for Italian agitators; and in the 1870s R. M. Carter, a Leeds coal merchant, described his opinions as ‘thoroughly radical’ because he endorsed, amongst other causes, legal protection for trade union funds.²⁸ Others, however, were much more moderate, with Brocklehurst supporting the Conservative Reform Bill of 1859, Sir Bernhard Samuelson being dismayed by radical trends in the Liberal Party during the 1890s and H. P. Cobb, a Banbury banker, being called a Liberal ‘of the old school’ at his death in 1910.²⁹ Liberalism was itself diverse, and Unitarians were to be found in most of the tendencies within it.

Their contribution to the other great party of state, the Conservatives, was slight. ‘To find a pronounced Tory nestling in our household of faith’, observed the *Christian Life* in 1885, ‘would indeed be a queer discovery; and it is as rare as it is queer.’³⁰ In that year there were no Conservative MPs at all. In the early years of the century, it is true, Viscount Castlereagh had been a leading Tory statesman and one of his steady supporters in the Commons was Robert Pemberton Milnes. Castlereagh, however, was formed by his distinctive aristocratic background and the circumstances of the times; and Milnes, though the son of another MP who was a member of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield, had himself graduated at Cambridge, so avowing

himself a member of the Church of England, before professing once more his family's Dissenting faith and raising his son a Unitarian.³¹ Both were on the margins of the denomination. Joshua Fielden, who sat as MP for the eastern division of the West Riding from 1868 to 1880, was far from a marginal figure, for he acted as president of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association during his time in parliament. He was more of a political eccentric, for he claimed never to have been a Conservative before he was induced to stand for the party in 1868 and his unreliability was a worry to the whips in the Commons. The most doctrinaire Conservative did not sit until 1889, when Sir Edward Harland, the co-founder of Harland and Wolff's shipyard, was elected for a Belfast constituency. He had been a stern opponent of Home Rule, and in parliament supported, as he put it, the 'Unionist policy of the Marq[uess] of Salisbury's government as being of vital importance to Protestantism in Ireland and to religious liberty generally'.³² That meant, however, that there was a total of only four Tory/Conservative MPs associated with the denomination in the whole century. The defence of the Union with Ireland nevertheless did strengthen anti-Liberal feeling among Unitarians. It rallied Joseph Chamberlain, five of his colleagues in the Commons and another five former MPs, though then out of the House, to Liberal Unionism. Several of these men attended the Nonconformist Unionist Association that in years around 1900 held banquets for prominent Unionist politicians so as to advertise that Nonconformists could indeed resist the Liberal policy for Ireland.³³ But the gesture was itself a sign of the relative rarity of the NUA position. Unitarians produced only ten Conservative or Unionist MPs between 1801 and 1900.

A single Unitarian MP in the period after the Great Reform Act was not a Liberal, a Conservative or a Liberal Unionist. This was not an early Labour politician, for although Fred Maddison, the working-class MP, was initially returned to Hull Corporation as a Labour member, that meant only that he was a defender of working-class interests. After Maddison entered the Commons in 1897, he was a staunch defender of the Lib-Lab connexion, unsparingly denouncing socialism and independent Labour politics. There was, however, an Irish Nationalist. John Pinkerton, though hailing from Ulster, was elected for Galway City as a follower of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1886, and, though he turned against his leader in the scandal over Parnell's divorce in 1890, Pinkerton remained a Home Rule MP down to 1900. He had been considered as a Liberal candidate for North Antrim in 1885, but, not securing the nomination, he stood anyhow as an Independent. Finding that he secured the support of the Nationalists of the constituency seems to have transformed him into a moderate Home Ruler.³⁴ It is significant that this exception to the Liberal norm proves the rule by having originated in the Liberal camp. Seven other Unitarians occupied Irish seats during the century, with five representing Scottish constituencies and six returned in Wales. In addition an English Member, H. P. Cobb, urged Home Rule for Scotland and Wales as well as for Ireland as a matter of consistency. One of the MPs for a Welsh constituency, Walter Coffin, was only the second Nonconformist to represent the principality since the Restoration of 1660.³⁵ Although he spoke Welsh fluently, he sat too early, in the 1850s, to be affected by the wave of Welsh national feeling that gathered force towards the end of the century. Nor was any other Unitarian later in the century swept along by it, partly because three of the six MPs sitting for Wales were actually Englishmen. Unitarianism,

because of its weakness except on the Carmarthen/Ceredigion border, was not a natural vehicle for national aspirations in Wales.

Of the causes taken up by MPs identified with the denomination, parliamentary reform looms as large as any. Most of the Unitarians in the Commons before 1832 were ardent in the cause of making parliament more representative of the people. It is true that one of them, Benjamin Hobhouse, sat between 1802 and 1806 for Grampound in Cornwall, a tiny borough that was so corrupt that it was to be disfranchised in 1821, ahead of the general reform. It is also true that the family of another, John Bonham Carter, was accused by Sir Robert Peel of treating Portsmouth, which he represented, as a pocket borough. Bonham Carter's reply was that 'the Borough is kept close for the purpose of making sure of two members to vote for throwing open all boroughs in the kingdom'.³⁶ Carter made good his assertion by helping to redraft the Reform Bill in 1831-32 so that it passed. Subsequently some Unitarian MPs such as Benjamin Heywood favoured only a moderate further extension of the suffrage, but others were far more radical. Several of them, including David Ricardo, the economist, John Bowring and W. J. Fox, were close to Jeremy Bentham, whose programme of utilitarian reform called for more rational constitutional arrangements such as the secret ballot. It is striking that fully twenty-eight of the MPs, by contrast with only five Congregationalists, have left evidence of support for the ballot. Four of the Unitarians went so far as to advocate the People's Charter, and subsequently as many as eight participated in the Northern Reform Union that stood for annual parliaments as well as the ballot. At least seven publicly backed women's enfranchisement, three favoured Lords reform towards the end of the century and a couple wanted the second chamber entirely abolished. One, Peter

Taylor, called before his death in 1891 for payment of MPs long before it became a Labour rallying cry.³⁷ This was a record of unusual commitment to the reforming causes of the era.

Retrenchment, a policy of reducing government expenditure, was also prominent on the agenda of many Unitarians at Westminster. James Stansfeld, who had been offered a post in the Liberal government in 1861, for example, caused a stir when, in the following year, he moved a Commons resolution calling for reduced spending by that very administration.³⁸ The related issue of free trade, which involved the removal of customs duties on imports, also appealed to them. The Manchester circle constituted the inner core of the Anti-Corn Law League that from its foundation at the end of the 1830s aimed to abolish protection against foreign grain. The first president was J. B. Smith, a co-founder was Edmund Potter and the creator of the Manchester organisation was John Bowring. Remarkably, Charles Paget, though himself one of the landowners defended by the corn laws, joined the agitation for their repeal.³⁹ The memory of Richard Cobden, the supreme ideologue of the League, was kept green in the later part of the century by T. B. Potter, who had succeeded his hero as MP for Rochdale. There were exceptions to the general enthusiasm for this cause. John Brocklehurst, though generally well disposed to free trade, argued that his own products, silk goods, deserved protection because they were luxuries. Sir Bernhard Samuelson began to hanker after protective measures in his later years, and Joseph Chamberlain rocked the political world by advocating tariff reform from 1903. Free trade was nevertheless one of the prime causes that drew Unitarian energies in the century as a whole.

In overseas affairs, one of the chief preoccupations of several MPs was with peace. They often saw the promotion of international harmony as a corollary of advancing free trade. Thus Fox and his circle were advocates of the People's International League from 1847 and R. H. Greg endorsed a peace conference at Manchester in 1858. Later on some of them took up the cause of arbitration, with Maddison acting from 1908 as secretary of the International Arbitration League. Several were fierce opponents of the South African War. This pacific stance, however, as the 1857 episode at Manchester illustrated, was not universal among Unitarians. At least six served in volunteer military units and one, W. E. Price, was briefly a regular officer. It was Joseph Chamberlain, after all, who as Colonial Secretary, bore most responsibility for taking Britain into the war against the Boers of South Africa. In the earlier part of the century there had been strong feeling against first the slave trade and then against slavery itself. William Smith was one of the lieutenants of William Wilberforce in his campaigns, helping found the African Institution and chairing the Anti-Slavery Society. The antagonism towards slavery helps explain the high degree of sympathy for the North during the American Civil War that led, for example, to efforts by George Melly and William Rathbone at Liverpool to prevent the building of vessels for the Confederacy. Broader global concerns did not loom large for most MPs, but there was support for Polish independence, the oppressed Christian subjects of Ottoman Turkey and persecuted Jews in Russia. Charles Schwann, a Manchester merchant, was notable towards the end of the period for taking up the cause of the Indian subjects of the Raj, even attending an early meeting of the Indian National Congress. Despite the common leanings towards peace, there was less consensus on international affairs than on domestic questions.

A cause close to the hearts of many pre-Victorian Dissenters was religious liberty. William Smith, as chairman of the Dissenting Deputies from 1805 to 1832, was responsible for defending the meeting houses of the land from infringements of their privileges. He also navigated the Unitarian Toleration Bill of 1813 on to the statute book so that it became known as ‘Mr William Smith’s Bill’. After the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 under his tutelage, the aims of Dissenters radicalised. Many, including several Unitarian MPs, started to demand the abolition of church rates and soon some also called for disestablishment. Objections to state grants for any religious purposes became their stock in trade, but the Unitarians were much less likely than their Congregational counterparts to support the Liberation Society that aimed to sever church and state. Only a single Unitarian MP, A. J. Williams, seems to have sat on its executive committee. Another, the Conservative Joshua Fielden, actually wrote in 1880 that he was ‘as much opposed as any Churchman can be to the separation of church and state’.⁴⁰ On the closely related issue of education, however, Unitarian MPs tended to be outspoken. Some of them took up particular aspects of education. Charles Paget advocated the part-time system, whereby children spent blocs of time at work and in school, that he was credited with inventing; Sir Bernhard Samuelson promoted technical education for the sake of industrial efficiency; and William Rathbone, a leading Liverpool merchant and a Caernarvonshire MP, was a chief backer of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889. But the pedagogic cause that drew most Unitarian MPs together was, as Alexander Henry, a Manchester cotton merchant, put it in 1852, the aim of ‘the diffusion of education unconnected with religious opinions’.⁴¹ They wanted a national system of schools in which no denominational test was applied. As early as

1837 Mark Philips chaired a Manchester public meeting that called for state-provided education on these lines. Most famously, Joseph Chamberlain led the National Education League that, just before the Education Act of 1870, demanded a network of elementary schools with a secular curriculum. It was very unusual that C. H. James, a Welsh solicitor and colliery proprietor, supported the 25th clause of the Education Act that allowed payments from public funds to denominational schools.⁴² In general education was seen as an extension of the question of religious equality. There must be no privilege for the established church or for any other religious body in the provision of schooling for the people.

A variety of social questions attracted the support of Unitarian MPs. Several opposed the inhumanity of the New Poor Law in the 1830s and one or two went beyond Fielden's factory reform movement to advocate particular measures for improving conditions at work. Joseph Crook, for example, carried a bill in 1860 to extend the benefits of the Factory Acts to bleachworks. More widespread as the century wore on, however, was the call for temperance legislation. Crook and R. M. Carter were keen advocates of the United Kingdom Alliance that demanded prohibition, and several more supported its regular attempts to empower localities to impose vetoes on the sale of alcohol. There was nevertheless an exception among them, for William Rathbone feared that prohibition, even at the local level, would be totally unenforceable. A concern among others from the late 1860s was opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts that provided for the state inspection of prostitutes near military or naval bases. James Stansfeld, a London brewer with Halifax roots, was the parliamentary leader of the movement to abolish the acts in the name of degraded women and Christian morality, eventually carrying their suspension in 1883 and their

abolition in 1886. But the most distinctive cause of the Unitarian MPs was their commitment to the removal of restrictions on Sunday recreation. It is true that Rathbone, again the exception, believed, like many other Victorians, in avoiding weekly work on Sundays as an aid to spirituality,⁴³ but a good number of his coreligionists struggled to open museums, art galleries and the like to the public on what others regarded as the sabbath. James Heywood, brother of Benjamin Heywood the banker, was president of the Sunday Society with this object from its foundation in 1875, Sir Henry Roscoe subsequently occupied the same position and Richard Chamberlain, Joseph's brother, was president of the Sunday Lecture Society. Here was an undoubted expression of their Unitarian values. They drew the line that marked off the sacred from the secular much less narrowly than many of their contemporaries.

The achievement of these men in national politics was relatively limited. It is true that, unlike the Congregationalists, they included in their ranks some who reached the cabinet. Viscount Castlereagh became Foreign Secretary for a full ten years, having to cope with the final years of Napoleon and the post-Napoleonic settlement of Europe. Joseph Chamberlain, remarkably, sat in Liberal cabinets as President of the Board of Trade from 1880 to 1885 and President of the Local Government Board in 1886 and subsequently in a Unionist cabinet as Colonial Secretary from 1895 to 1903. James Stansfeld served as President of the Poor Law Board and its successor the Local Government Board from 1871 to 1874 and briefly as Chamberlain's replacement in 1886. But a contemporary commentator observed of Stansfeld that 'his absolute devotion to great principles made him an unsatisfactory member of cabinets'.⁴⁴ His dedication to the Anti-Contagious Diseases Acts

movement kept Stansfeld out of Gladstone's second administration, when otherwise he might have risen to higher cabinet rank. Likewise other Unitarian MPs were more committed to pressure-group politics than to scaling the heights of power. Jesse Collings, Chamberlain's closest adjutant, held junior government office, at the Local Government Board in 1886 and at the Home Office from 1895 to 1902, but apart from him only Andrew Porter reached significant positions of state, becoming Solicitor General and then Attorney General for Ireland in Gladstone's second administration. Porter declined the Irish Secretaryship in 1882, and much earlier, in 1809, R. P. Milnes had refused as high a post as the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. It is said that in the 1830s Daniel Whittle Harvey, a peculiarly angular solicitor who had been refused admission to the bar for having slandered a barrister, was offered a position in government but refused it because he considered it beneath his dignity.⁴⁵ So the record of government office is small. It was more natural for Unitarians to be asked to propose the address of thanks to the crown at the opening of the session, an honorific role for backbenchers that was filled by James Heywood, Charles Paget and Mark Philips. Many of the MPs maintained low profiles in the Commons. As speakers John Biggs, a Leicester hosier, had a 'homely style',⁴⁶ his brother William was too didactic and John Bonham Carter, like many others, was too diffident. Walter Coffin never opened his mouth at all in the House.⁴⁷ Apart from Castlereagh and Chamberlain, important but in many ways unusual exceptions, the MPs were not major players in national affairs.

In their localities, by contrast, they were often figures who wielded enormous authority. Joshua Fielden pressed for Todmorden, where his mill was the chief employer of labour, to receive a Local Board, which he dominated after joining it in

1861, and symbolised his ascendancy fourteen years later by giving, with his brothers, a town hall costing as much as £54,000 that still watches over the main junction in the town.⁴⁸ Richard Peacock, who was from 1863 the first chairman of the Local Board at Gorton, near Manchester, was the founder of the locomotive works that was the reason for the existence of the community.⁴⁹ In incorporated towns, at least eighteen Unitarian MPs became councillors, at least the same number aldermen and the same number again mayors or Lord Mayors. It is significant that the first mayors of the reformed corporations of Leicester and Derby in 1835 were Thomas Paget and Joseph Strutt, and that the first Lord Mayor of Leeds in 1896 was Sir James Kitson, all Unitarians. Of the four who rose to become Lord Mayor of London, Sir Matthew Wood, MP for the City from 1817 until his death in 1843, though he had his rivals, was as highly respected in his corporation as were his provincial equivalents in theirs. The Congregational MPs, it is true, were even more rooted in their home towns, but the Unitarians outdid them in one significant way. Whereas only six of the Congregationalists were chosen as High Sheriff, as many as sixteen of the Unitarians occupied the position. Their larger number in this county office reflects their higher profile in the society of the shires, especially after their retirement to rural estates. They were often the first Dissenters to hold their posts. When, in 1856, R. N. Philips served as High Sheriff of Lancashire, he ensured the toast at his banquet was changed from the customary formula 'the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese' to 'the Clergy and Ministers of all Denominations'.⁵⁰ It was a signal that a Unitarian was in office. The MPs were usually men of weight in their neighbourhoods.

They commonly demonstrated a strong commitment to the places where they lived or worked. Of Daniel Gaskell, a landowner who supported at Wakefield the

Lancasterian Schools, the Mechanics' Institution, the Clayton Hospital, the Royal Albert Asylum for Idiots and the Rifle Corps, it was said that he 'regarded the town with an intensely local feeling'.⁵¹ Many, like Gaskell, gave priority to education, often being generous to Lancasterian or British schools. They sometimes ran their own works schools and they frequently served as governors of grammar, secondary and new girls' schools, after 1870 as members of school boards and towards the end of the century as promoters of technical schools. J. P. Thomasson, a Bolton cotton spinner, was typical in giving land for the town's Girls' High School, a site for a boarding school and an endowment for the secondary and higher education of Bolton students.⁵² The MPs were particularly likely to take an interest in the early phase of the expansion of higher education. James Heywood, whose parliamentary career was most notable for his promotion of reform at Oxford and Cambridge, was also one of the half dozen who supported Owens College, Manchester, to which he gave its first library of 1,200 volumes in 1851.⁵³ These men were also exceptionally committed to Mechanics' Institutions, Heywood's older brother Benjamin, for instance, being the founder and first president of the Manchester Mechanics'. They participated in more select bodies like the Athenaeums and Literary and Philosophical Societies, with John Marshall being a founder of the flourishing Leeds example. But they also wanted to bring culture to the masses, and so established free libraries, reading rooms, museums, art galleries, exhibitions and series of concerts. Several showed their belief in the value of fresh air, with Joseph Strutt laying out an arboretum at Derby and Mark Philips buying land for a recreation ground that bore his name in Manchester. Hospitals were almost as popular an object of patronage as schools, with asylums and facilities for the blind being the preoccupation of a few. Rathbone initiated a whole new caring sector with his training home for domestic nurses, the result of witnessing

the benefits of nursing care in the home for his own dying wife. Sir Sydney Waterlow, a London printer, established through his Industrial Dwellings Company a venture in philanthropic housing that before his death in 1906 catered for some 30,000 souls. And Sir Moses Manfield supported a battery of Northampton organisations such as the Artizans' and Labourers' Friend Society and the Poor Children's Christmas Dinner Fund. These local agencies added status to the philanthropists at the same time as they tempered the growing pains of an industrial economy.

The men themselves varied in their degree of culture. R. M. Carter, the Leeds coal merchant who retained the lineaments of his humble origins, 'does not', it was remarked, 'pretend to polish and refinement; but he has a good deal of rough intellectual vigour'.⁵⁴ John Marshall, the earlier flax spinner of the same city, however, saw it as his duty to cultivate qualities commensurate with his riches. 'The first effects of newly acquired wealth', he mused in 1805, 'are always seen in the buildings of a town. Refinement of taste and manners are of slower growth. It is the next generation which must spend what their fathers have learned to accumulate.'⁵⁵ Accordingly he assembled a collection of books and paintings and entertained the Wordsworths and Carlyle at his Lake District seat. William Roscoe, a Liverpool banker, was a man of genuine scholarship, speaking French fluently, composing in Italian and learning Greek in middle age. His biographies of Lorenzo the Magnificent (1796) and Pope Leo X (1805) are major literary achievements. Sir John Bowring published prolifically in European literature, though with less discrimination than Roscoe, earning a variety of foreign distinctions. W. E. Price gave a paper on the Anglo-Saxon language and learned Norwegian while prevented from leaving the country by his wife's illness.⁵⁶ C. S. Kenny, pursuing an academic career, received

the accolade of a Fellowship of the British Academy. Perhaps the greatest intellectual distinction belonged to David Ricardo, whose book *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817) laid the foundations of modern economics, but several others, including Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, the leading advocate of the theory that Shakespeare's works were written by Francis Bacon, published prolifically. In taste, though many of the MPs purchased paintings, William Kenrick, a Birmingham hardware manufacturer, probably bears off the palm. A close friend of William Morris and Sir Edward Burne-Jones, his purchases formed the core of the Birmingham Art Gallery's superb collection of Pre-Raphaelite art. Even more pursued scientific interests. Some, like Durning-Lawrence, merely dabbled, but Sir Henry Roscoe was a professional and G. W. Wood and W. E. Price took a serious interest in geology and biology. Ten of the MPs were elected to be Fellows of the Royal Society. Perhaps their broader cultural concerns – and Joseph Chamberlain must be an exception here – inhibited any single-minded quest for power.

In theology the group was varied. Some coming from old Presbyterian families such as G. W. Wood were reserved about expressing their inherited religious opinions in public, but others were fired with the zeal of converts. Ten of the MPs had come to Unitarianism from other religious standpoints and some of them, especially John Fielden, a product of Methodist Unitarianism, and Fox, a convert from Independency, showed an evangelistic fervour to spread their new faith. In the early part of the century, however, both types professed some strikingly rational beliefs such as Fielden's upholding of the infallibility of scripture.⁵⁷ A comparable rational legacy from the Enlightenment induced William Roscoe to deprecate 'the speculative and abstruse parts of the New Testament' in favour of 'the moral or

preceptive part'.⁵⁸ It was a similar standpoint that led James Heywood to recommend biblical criticism, proposing in the Commons in 1856 a royal commission to plan the revision of the Authorised Version. The Bible remained central to the faith of several who maintained the views of the older school down to the end of the century. Thus C. H. James was praised on his death in 1890 by the Merthyr Tydfil Baptist minister for being 'a man well up in Scripture';⁵⁹ and Sir James Lawrence, a wealthy metropolitan building contractor, clung to the biblically based teachings he had imbibed at school from the ministers John Scott Parker and Joseph Hutton, supporting Robert Spears' ministry in London and deploring what he called 'the later theistic position'.⁶⁰ Others, however, were more inclined to the newer views moulded by the Romantic mood of the times. Sir James Lawrence's brother, Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, attended the ministry of Spears in the 1860s, but subsequent reading made him broader in his opinions;⁶¹ Rathbone, a disciple and brother-in-law of J. H. Thom, disliked the teaching of Spears;⁶² and Caleb Wright, though from a very traditional Lancashire meeting house, attended when in London the Free Christian ministry of Stopford Brooke, which was also where James Martineau worshipped.⁶³ A few were close to the Evangelicals of the day. Rathbone in particular, drawing from his Quaker family inheritance, expressed an intensely personal faith in Christ, whom he habitually called 'the Master'.⁶⁴ He held that younger ministers preached little but abstractions, himself preferring, as he put it in 1891, 'the religion of Christ as set forth in his own words, and as embodied in his own person and life'.⁶⁵ The same currents of opinion that flowed among Unitarians at large affected the MPs, though it may be that they leant to slightly older expressions of the faith than their contemporaries in the ministry.

The MPs came from a wide range of churches, but a few of the congregations were notably productive. The Church of the Messiah, Birmingham, and Great Meeting, Leicester, had four each, Renshaw Street, Liverpool, together with its successor in Ullet Road, seems to have been attended by six, Cross Street, Manchester, enjoyed the support of at least seven and Essex Street, with its successor the Essex Church, had nine, supplemented by at least three more attending when in the capital. School appears to have been almost as potent as church in framing the convictions of many, with certainly twenty-seven and probably more MPs having been taught at distinctively Unitarian establishments. R. N. Philips, who went on from Lant Carpenter's school at Bristol to Rugby, claimed that when he entered the Commons it contained more old boys from the Unitarian minister's institution than from the public school.⁶⁶ Four MPs were sons of ministers, several more had brothers, brothers-in-law and other relatives in the ministry and one, W. J. Fox, was himself a minister. At least eight had taught in Sunday school and four are known to have conducted services themselves. Sometimes an MP played a significant role in his congregation, as warden, president, treasurer, or, most frequently, trustee. They were often donors of buildings and fittings to their own or other congregations, Joshua Fielden and his brothers probably making the most lavish gift, the Gothic building of Todmorden Unitarian Church, completed in 1869 with elaborate carving, expensive marble and rich stained glass.⁶⁷ Beyond their congregational involvement, the participation of the MPs in the wider denomination varied. Sir Charles Schwann, though a loyal Unitarian, latterly at Southport, took no part at all in denominational affairs.⁶⁸ As many as seventeen, however, served as president of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and at least another six acted as vice-president. It was evidently more important to Unitarians to secure an MP as the nominal head of their

denominational body than for the Congregationalists, who chose only four MPs as chairman of their Union. The favourite denominational cause was Manchester New College, where several MPs had been educated, and its successor, Manchester College, Oxford. Quite a number also supported the Unitarian Home Missionary College, the domestic missions and the regional Unitarian bodies. They acted for the Hibbert Trust, Dr Williams's Library and the Holt Fund. One or two gave their time to assorted agencies such as the New England Company, the Van Mission, the Ministers' Pension Fund and the *Christian Life* and *Inquirer* newspapers. Probably most assiduous in propagating Unitarianism was Sir James Lawrence, who, with his brother Sir William, actually travelled in 1886 to Transylvania, then part of Hungary, to encourage the indigenous adherents of the faith.⁶⁹ The public endorsement of Unitarianism by men elected to the national legislature was probably as important a contribution to the cause as their substantial financial support.

That was because being a Unitarian in the nineteenth century was not always easy. The cry of 'Church and King' was raised against William Roscoe as a Dissenter when he stood for Liverpool in 1806,⁷⁰ but wilful misunderstandings of their specific beliefs were also thrown at Unitarian candidates. R. M. Carter was called an atheist⁷¹ and Joseph Chamberlain, at the 1885 general election, was denounced as a Comtist and hater of Christianity.⁷² When, in 1847, J. B. Smith was a candidate for Stirling Burghs, placards appeared in Dunfermline asking whether the electors would vote for a Unitarian. An influential blacksmith announced that he would not, but an ingenious supporter of the Unitarian pointed out that his opponent was a Trinitarian, and so the blacksmith, declaring that was worse, was persuaded to vote for Smith.⁷³ Sometimes Unitarians were inclined to drop their denominational label as a liability, which the

grand new Northampton church erected by Sir Moses Manfield in 1897 actually did.⁷⁴

Quite a number of the MPs, however, were made of sterner stuff. J. A. Turner had nothing but contempt for those hiding their convictions.⁷⁵ Fred Maddison ‘gloried in the name of Unitarian’.⁷⁶ ‘I might like another name better’, observed Sir James Kitson, ‘but it would not tell men what they want to know of me.’⁷⁷ The Unitarian MPs constituted an advertisement for their cause. Some of them were cold, aloof or overbearing, but several, including the ‘tender-hearted’ John Biggs who could not bear to turn away applicants for help and Daniel Gaskell who was reputed to give away half his income, displayed attractive private characters.⁷⁸ They were known, furthermore, for their public persona. They were commonly highly successful men of business, Liberal by party and progressive in the causes they espoused. They may not have enjoyed much power at Westminster, but they did exercise influence in the country at large. Some possessed culture, strongly held theological views and a firm identification with denominational causes. Without them, the Unitarian body would probably have been weaker in numbers and certainly much weaker in achievement.

¹ *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament* [hereafter *WWBMP*], ed. Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, 4 vols (Hassocks, Sussex, 1976-81), s.v.

² *Inquirer* [hereafter *I*], 5 Oct. 1867, p. 648.

³ Alan Ruston, ‘The Chamberlains and Unitarianism’, *TUHS*, 24 (2008), pp. 103-5.

⁴ *I*, 12 Dec. 185, p. 788.

⁵ *I*, 11 June 1864, p. 391.

⁶ *I*, 12 Dec. 1885, p. 788.

⁷ [Alexander Gordon], *Family History of the Lawrences of Cornwall*, privately printed (West Norwood, 1915), p. 19. *Macclesfield Chronicle*, 8 June 1900, [p. 5].

⁸ *I*, 19 Apr. 1932, p. 192. I am grateful for the information on Emmanuel to Professor J. C. G. Binfield.

⁹ *I*, 12 Dec. 1885, p. 788. D. W. Bebbington, *Congregational Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century*, Occasional Publication No. 1, United Reformed Church History Society and Congregational History Society (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 33-4.

¹⁰ *Memorable Unitarians* (London, 1906), p. 351.

¹¹ Barbara and Hensleigh Wedgwood, *The Wedgwood Circle, 1730-1897* (London, 1980), p. 106.

¹² Thomas Heywood, *A Memoir of Sir Benjamin Heywood, Baronet*, privately published (Manchester, [1888]), pp. 121, 144.

¹³ *Banbury Advertiser*, 18 May 1905, p. 5.

¹⁴ *I*, 4 Apr. 1891, p. 233.

¹⁵ Bebbington, *Congregational Members of Parliament*, p. 2.

¹⁶ D. M. Thompson, *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1972), pp. 152-3.

-
- ¹⁷ *I*, 10 Apr. 1880, p. 227.
- ¹⁸ *Rochdale Observer*, 9 Nov. 1898, p. 4.
- ¹⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter *ODNB*], ed. Colin Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford, 2004), s.v. (Alan Ruston).
- ²⁰ J. G. Hurst, *Edmund Potter D.L., F.R.S., M.P., J. P. and Dinting Vale* (Manchester, 1948), p. 16.
- ²¹ Mary B. Rose, *The Greggs of Quarry Bank Mill: The Rise and Decline of a Family Firm, 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 132.
- ²² *ODNB*.
- ²³ *Manchester Guardian*, 7 Oct. 1843, p. 5.
- ²⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, 21 Jan. 1826, quoted by W. G. Rimmer, *Marshalls of Leeds, Flax-Spinners, 1788-1886* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 111).
- ²⁵ *An Alphabetical List of the Burgesses & Freeholders who polled before William Howitt and William Hickling Gentlemen Sheriffs of the Town and County of the Town of Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1803), p. vi.
- ²⁶ *I*, 14 Nov. 1868, p. 726.
- ²⁷ *WWBMP*.
- ²⁸ *WWBMP*.
- ²⁹ *Banbury Advertiser*, 3 Feb. 1910, p. 8.
- ³⁰ *Christian Life*, 19 Dec. 1885, p. 612.
- ³¹ *ODNB* (s.v. Richard Monckton Milnes).
- ³² *WWBMP*, 2.
- ³³ D. W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London, 1982), pp. 93-6.
- ³⁴ B. M. Walker, *Ulster Politics: The Formative Years, 1868-86* (Belfast, 1989), pp. 196, 216.
- ³⁵ G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), p. 247.
- ³⁶ Alan Ruston, 'Sir John Carter', *Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography*, <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/listaf.html>, accessed 4 February 2008.
- ³⁷ *Leicester Daily Post*, 22 Dec. 1891, quoted in *ODNB*.
- ³⁸ *ODNB*.
- ³⁹ *Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express*, 15 Oct. 1873, [p. 3].
- ⁴⁰ *WWBMP*.
- ⁴¹ *WWBMP*.
- ⁴² *Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (London, 1959), s.v.
- ⁴³ Eleanor F. Rathbone, *William Rathbone: A Memoir* (London, 1905), p. 451.
- ⁴⁴ Justin Mc Carthy quoted in *Memorable Unitarians* [hereafter *MU*] (London, 1906), p. 393.
- ⁴⁵ Robert Spears, *Record of Unitarian Worthies* (London, [1876?]), p. 208.
- ⁴⁶ *Leicester Journal*, 28 Feb. 1862, quoted in *ODNB*.
- ⁴⁷ K. O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922* (Cardiff, 1920), p. 18.
- ⁴⁸ B. R. Law, *Fieldens of Todmorden: A 19th Century Business Dynasty* (Littleborough, Lancs, 1995), pp. 173, 180.
- ⁴⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Mar. 1889, p. 8.
- ⁵⁰ *I*, 8 Mar. 1890, p. 114.
- ⁵¹ *I*, 1 Jan. 1876, p. 12.
- ⁵² *I*, 21 May 1904, p. 326.
- ⁵³ Herbert McLachlan, *The Unitarian Home Missionary College, 1854-1914* (London, 1915), p. 81.
- ⁵⁴ *I*, 5 Dec. 1868, p. 775.
- ⁵⁵ 'Tours', 5 Aug. 1807, MS quoted in Rimmer, *Marshalls of Leeds*, p. 103.
- ⁵⁶ *I*, 6 Mar. 1886, p. 158. *Gloucester Journal*, 13 Feb. 1886, p. 5.
- ⁵⁷ S. A. Weaver, *John Fielden and the Politics of Popular Radicalism, 1832-1847* (Oxford, 1847), p. 35.
- ⁵⁸ Henry Roscoe, *The Life of William Roscoe*, 2 vols (London, 1833), 1, p. 37.
- ⁵⁹ *South Wales Daily News*, 6 Oct. 1890, p. 3.
- ⁶⁰ Gordon, *Lawrences of Cornwall*, p. 36.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ⁶² Rathbone, *Rathbone*, p. 433.
- ⁶³ *I*, 14 May 1898, p. 311.
- ⁶⁴ *MU*, p. 404.
- ⁶⁵ Rathbone, *Rathbone*, p. 432.
- ⁶⁶ *I*, 15 Mar. 1890, p. 161.

⁶⁷ Law, *Fieldens of Todmorden*, p. 177.

⁶⁸ *MG*, 17 July 1929, p. 13.

⁶⁹ Gordon, *Lawrences of Cornwall*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ *History of the Election for Members of Parliament for the Borough of Liverpool, 1806* (Liverpool, 1806), p. 15.

⁷¹ *I*, 5 Dec. 1868, p. 775.

⁷² *I*, 28 Nov. 1885, p. 760.

⁷³ Andrew Carnegie, *Autobiography* (London, 1920), p. 12.

⁷⁴ *Northampton Daily Reporter*, 1 Aug. 1899, p. 6.

⁷⁵ *I*, 5 Oct. 1867, p. 648.

⁷⁶ *I*, 20 Mar. 1937, p. 141.

⁷⁷ *Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds: Memorial Window to the late Lord Airedale* (Leeds, [1916]), p. 2.

⁷⁸ *Midland Free Press* quoted by *I*, 17 June 1871, p. 390. *I*, 5 Feb. 1876, p. 94.